

Evaluation Summary: Combating Exploitive Labor Through Education in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia Together (KURET) Project, Regional Report

Project and Evaluation Facts

Region/Country: Africa/Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia

Grantee: World Vision and the International Rescue Committee

Project Duration: September 30, 2004 – March 31, 2009

Fiscal Year and Funding Level:
FY 2004 USD 14,500,000
World Vision Matching Funds USD 5,906,929

Type of Evaluation: Midterm

Date of Evaluation: March 2007

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Evaluation Management: Macro International

Evaluator(s): Karen Tietjen (team leader) and Florence Etta

Background and Context

Summary of Project Objectives and Focus

KURET was a four-year project that aimed to enhance access to education for children aged 5 - 17 in HIV/AIDS-affected communities. The project operated in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia, and was focused on children engaged in or at-risk of engaging in exploitative labor in various sectors including domestic service, agriculture, fishing, and commercial sexual exploitation.

The project was guided by the following Regional and National Immediate Objectives:

Regional-Level Objectives

- Quality of KURET country programs assured;
- Body of knowledge related to child labor, HIV/AIDS, and education increased;
- Promising practices shared with key stakeholders and decision makers;
- Capacity of national & regional institutions to initiate policy and advocacy increased.

National Objectives for Each Country

- Access to education for target children increased;
- Improved quality and relevance of educational services available to children at

risk of, and to children that have been removed from the worst forms of child labor (WFCL);

- Increased awareness of key stakeholders on the negative effects of child labor, the importance of education, and the relationship between HIV / AIDS and education;
- Support for the education of target children by government institutions, committees, and households increased.

The project was designed to work closely with government actors, NGOs, and community-based organizations. The project subcontracted with the Academy for Educational Development (AED) for monitoring and evaluation, as well as work at the policy level.

Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

The midterm evaluation examined project performance to date in relation to stated objectives. Specifically, the evaluation reviewed and assessed activities with respect to their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Further, the evaluation was designed to be a learning process that could serve to provide guidance as to revisions in strategy for the balance of the cooperative agreement to ensure project objectives could be realized.

Methodology of Evaluation

The evaluation was based on a desk review of relevant documentation, followed by a field mission to all four countries conducted by the evaluation team from October 10, 2006 to November 22, 2006. The field work consisted of interviews, focus groups and other information collection techniques with stakeholders including government representatives, NGOs at the national, provincial, and district level, children, parents of beneficiaries, teachers, project staff, and USDOL representatives. The evaluation was affected in accordance with terms of reference (TOR), as prepared by Macro International with input from USDOL and other key stakeholders.

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Evaluation's Main Findings & Conclusions

Performance Summary

Despite challenges such as war, conflict, political unrest, and natural disasters, the KURET project has served to enroll nearly 24,000 children in education or training services within its first two years of operation. In addition, the project has served to affect the national enabling environment through partnerships with select ministries, and the local enabling environment through the creation of District Child Labor Committees and Local Child Labor Committees.

Nonetheless, the project faces two challenges that serve to place its effectiveness and sustainability at risk. Namely, the project has exhibited weakness in its conceptualization and delivery of select services and in its overall design. Consequently, as per the evaluators' conclusion, the project's rather ambitious policy, capacity building, and behavioral change agenda is not likely to be met prior to the project's conclusion.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

Lessons Learned

- A four-year time frame is not sufficient to put in place the conditions for sustainable efforts to eliminate child labor;
- As an external project has limited control of the policy arena, in order successfully affect policy initiatives, a flexible and opportunistic approach must be employed;
- Multiple policy, institutional development, and capacity building initiatives should be conducted concurrently;
- Interventions, services, and innovations that require government support should be designed to conform to government policy and investment framework;
- Direct beneficiary targets should not be established within the first year;
- Although a student support package cannot fully address children's needs, the support package should enable their full participation in education;

- A well-defined conceptualization and shared understanding of goals and obligations is fundamental prior to start up;
- Adult attention provided by local monitoring / mentoring groups affords motivation and encouragement to children to remain in school;
- Withdrawing a child from child labor is not a one-time proposition, but rather is a gradual process; and
- USDOL indicators do not provide for reporting gradations of child involvement in labor.

Key Recommendations

Following are a few of the key recommendations as presented by the evaluators:

- Review the student support package to ensure materials encourage full participation in school;
- Develop a more coherent teacher training strategy to ensure that a core number of teachers at each learning site have received adequate guidance;
- Supplement the awareness raising strategy with a list of direct initiatives to be undertaken to ensure awareness translates into modification of behavior;
- Make working with national ministries of education a regional office priority;
- Develop and revise guidance and resource materials for new areas and for existing areas that need reinforcement;
- Assess and analyze staffing structures, and amend as needed to ensure programmatic efficiency is reached;
- Re-examine KURET budget to determine the extent to which funds can be reallocated to improve project support to beneficiaries;
- Strengthen Data Quality Assurance mechanism and develop a Monitoring and Evaluation plan; and
- Revise exit strategy to address how KURET will establish conditions to ensure initiatives will be sustained.